(c) It is the primary responsibility of the State Governments to establish these courts in consultation with the concerned High Courts. There is no proposal, at present, with the Government of India to increase the number of Fast Track Courts in the Country.

(d) It is the primary responsibility of State Governments to fill up the vacancies of these courts in consultation with the concerned High Courts.

Ban on exit polls

t 2869. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken by Government to enact a suitable law to ban exit polls during the elections;

(b) if so, the details thereof, as on date; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) A proposal on ban on exit polls was forwared by the Election Commission recommending to the Government for the need for a specific provision in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 prohibiting the publishing and disseminating of results of any opinion poll starting from the date of notification of election and till the completion of poll in the last phase of election. The proposal is under consideration.

New Mineral Policy

2870. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) by when Government is going to announce the New Mineral Policy;

(b) what would be salient features of the proposed Policy;

(c) whether the views of States have been taken in this regard;

(d) if so, the details of their views;

(e) whether any State has opposed the proposed Policy; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) to (d) The Government has enunciated the new National Mineral Policy, 2008, taking into consideration the views of mineral bearing States. The new Policy has enunciated policy measures like assured right to next stage mineral concession, transferability of mineral concessions and transparency in allotment of concessions, in order to reduce delays which are seen as impediments to investment and technology flow in the mining sector in India. The Mining policy also seeks to develop a sustainable framework for optimum utilisation of the country's natural mineral resources for the industrial growth in the country and at the same time improving the life of people living in the mining areas, which are generally located in the backward and tribal regions of the country. The new National Mineral Policy is available on the website of the Ministry of Mines (http://mines.nic.in).

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(e) and (f) The Government has received representation from some States on the new National Mineral Policy, 2008, raising concerns on the need to allow the State Government to give preference to value addition within the state, policy on seamless transition, security of tenure, need to strengthen Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and allow preferential treatment in grant of mineral concessions to PSUs, apart from requesting for levy of royalty on *ad valorem* basis. These issues had been considered and appropriately addressed by the Government before the enunciation of National Mineral Policy, 2008.

Dead rent on mines

2871. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken a decision to revise the dead rent on mines, especially on iron;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) to (c) Rates of dead rent were last revised on 14.10.2004. A Study Group was constituted by Ministry of Mines to *inter alia* suggest revision of rates of dead rent on minerals including iron ore. The Study Group has submitted its report to the Centra! Government, which is under consideration.

New Mineral Policy

2872. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether recently, both the Houses of Parliament expressed serious concern over the delay in finalizing the mineral policy;

(b) whether the Union Cabinet has referred the mining policy to GoM, headed by the Home Minister, to address the issues facing both the Steel and mining industries and has recommended **a** policy, conducive for the overall growth of both the industries;

(c) whether GoM has already submitted its recommendations in this regard;

(d) by when Government is likely to announce the policy; and

(e) to what extent this new policy would help in simplifying mining rules and regulations?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) to (e) The Government has enunciated its new National Mineral Policy, 2008, which is available on the website of the Ministry of Mines (http://mines.nic.in). The new Policy was also referred to GoM under the chairmanship of Home Minister. The new National Mineral Policy envisages streamlining and simplifying the procedures in grant of mineral concessions in order to attrack investment into mining sector.

Sapphire reserves in Jammu and Kashmir

t 2873. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Jammu and Kashmir has the best of Sapphire reserves in the world;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.